



METRO HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2025

The mission of the Metro Human Relations Commission is to protect and promote the personal dignity, peace, safety, security, and general welfare of all people in Nashville and Davidson County through education, training, advocacy, and compliance services. Our offices are located at 150 2nd Avenue N., Suite 217, Nashville, TN 37201,

Contact us at: 615-880-3370, MHRC@Nashville.gov, or www.nashville.gov/departments/human-relations

A WORD FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAVIE TUCKER JR.

America has a long, long history of political violence. From the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, fights in Congress, tar and feathering, duels, physical assaults, assassinations, and lynchings have been an integral part of American history.

Throughout our life there are often significant moments that become places of social and communal reflection; the death of Charlie Kirk is one of those moments. We have this public figure who had exercised his 1st Amendment right of freedom of speech for many years, celebrated by some and despised by others, whose life has now been added to the pantheon of those whose lives were silenced by political violence, some famous and many others, not so much. As all political sides are now engaged in the assignment of fault and pledges of revenge, what are those of us who are committed to nonviolence, regardless of our political affiliations, to do in such a moment as this?

The death of Charlie Kirk is not only reverberating through our nation, but also through our region, our city, and our social circles. This social tremor requires us to react, reflexively, so we can attempt to rebalance ourselves. We can very easily fail into the groupthink of the day, blaming others, picking our side over the other side, not realizing that doing so further normalizes, justifies and in many cases encourages further violence.

Rabbi Abraham Heschel said, “Our eyes are witness to the callousness and cruelty of man, but our heart tries to obliterate the memories, to calm the nerves, and to silence our conscience.” Some social commentators are saying, “this is not who we are”, while others proclaim, “this is exactly who we are”. These two positions are not helpful; they force us again to pick a side. Red or blue, democrat or republican, conservative or liberal, and woke or anti-woke provides no refuge, no safe space for those of us committed to nonviolence in our civic discourse.

COMMISSIONER SPOTLIGHT: DAHRON JOHNSON

As a Licensed Chaplain and Minister of the United Church of Christ, Commissioner Daron Johnson is an active member of Nashville’s movement for the respect and dignity of all people. Commissioner Johnson has served on boards of Neighbor2Neighbor, TN Valley Health System, Community Advisory Council at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, TN Equality Project and so many more.

Commissioner Johnson spearheaded the writing of a letter for National Coming Out Day and presented it at various events across Nashville, including Black Pride and the Photographers for Social Justice Art Show.

Daron Johnson, far left, leads community members in reading MHRC’s letter for National Coming Out Day. Photo credit: Jennifer Lake



LANGUAGE ACCESS IS SO BACK

‘Language access’ is defined as “providing Limited English Proficient (LEP) people with reasonable access to the same services as English-speaking individuals”. This sort of service isn’t just wishful thinking from your friendly local Human Relations Commission – it is a federal protection, by both Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 2000’s Executive Order 13166. Courts have interpreted Title VI’s prohibition of discrimination on the basis of national origin to include discrimination based on English proficiency, establishing that language access is not a luxury – it is a critical and necessary element of Metro Nashville’s services.

To set the scene of language access in Metro Nashville:

- In 2017, MHRC conducted a language access study to comprehensively assess the services provided to linguistic minorities – namely, LEP constituents and those who were Deaf, deaf, and hard of hearing. While the report provided a solid foundation for language access in Nashville, many of its findings and recommendations were left unimplemented.
- In 2023, there was a pilot language access program between the Tennessee Language Center and six metro agencies (including MHRC) that reinvigorated this conversation.
- In Spring of 2024, MHRC presented to the Immigrant Caucus, then to Department Heads in October 2024 on the importance of Language Access, after which the Mayor included an allocation for a new position at MHRC and dedicated funding for a Metro-wide language access assessment in FY25-26.

Gavin Crowell-Williamson, MHRC’s research analyst and Title VI coordinator, has been leading the design of the Language Access Study (LAS). This updated version of the LAS will offer a snapshot of how Metro Nashville is serving its LEP constituents, to highlight best practices already in existence within Metro departments, and to identify areas of opportunity for improvement eight years after the initial study.

The study is already quickly moving ahead – MHRC has designed and tweaked its methodology for the study, including several iterations following conversations with Metro Departments and community organizations (the Mayor’s Office, Finance, Nashville International Center for Empowerment, and Conexión Américas, to name a few). The study is now moving into Departmental Assessments (in collaboration with each department’s Title VI Coordinator), after which a comprehensive policy review and community survey will launch in November.

The report is set to be published in Spring 2026. Do you have a special connection to Language Access? Please reach out to Gavin Crowell-Williamson (gavin.crowell-williamson@nashville.gov). You may recognize Gavin from his time on the Community Oversight / Review Board staff, where he was most recently the Research and Policy Manager.

MHR“SEES”: HERE ARE SOME STORIES THAT CAUGHT OUR ATTENTION

Federal shutdown: As of the writing of this newsletter on 10/28/25, the federal government continues to be shut down. Locally, there are and will continue to be many impacts, including SNAP benefits, which are set to lapse in November. The Tennessean has published a few articles on this topic, including: [Gov. Lee will not use state reserves](#)

District 7th Congressional District Race: There are too many articles to link, but we have been following this race. Election day is set for Tuesday, December 2, 2025; consider becoming a poll worker to keep elections fair and open in Tennessee. More info on how to become a poll worker here: <https://sos.tn.gov/elections/services/become-a-poll-worker>

Creation of Unified Housing Council: The Community Foundation of Middle TN and Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce announced the creation of a 20-person council to advance the city’s Unified Housing Strategy, aimed at addressing Nashville’s housing crisis. The council is composed of representatives from public, private and nonprofit sector. [Nashville Launches Unified Housing Leadership Council](#)

12% rise in homeless population in Hamilton County: The Chattanooga Regional Homeless Coalition published their Southeast Tennessee State of Homelessness Report, which shows a 12% increase in homelessness in counties southeast of Davidson. Their recommendations include: expanding housing and shelter capacity, investing and diversion

and prevention, incentivizing landlords and affordable development, and encouraging local government investment.

[Housing crisis in southeast TN](#)

Low use of services by immigrant victims following ICE sweeps. Counselors at Metro Nashville Police Department's Family Safety Center have shared that the use of services by immigrant crime victims has been negatively impacted by May's ICE raids: [In Nashville, immigration sweeps deter crime victims from coming forward](#)

NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT: TN LOCAL FOOD SUMMIT

TN Local Food www.tnlocalfood.org Executive Director: Natalie Ashker-Seevers

TN Local Food was founded in 2010 to promote sustainable farming and strengthen our local food system. Their mission is to serve as a bridge-builder, supporting regenerative local food systems through education, resources, and meaningful connections. This year their TN Local Food Summit will be held at Trevecca Community Church, Friday December 5 through Sunday 7. The line-up of speakers includes farmers, faith leaders, teachers, land donors, environmental conservation advocates, and more. If you are interested in farming, permaculture, addressing food deserts, and equity in access to healthy food, we recommend you connect with TN Local Food. More information at: <https://www.tnlocalfood.org/2025-conference-home>



UPCOMING EVENTS, CELEBRATIONS, DATES TO NOTE

There are many important events happening across the city in the coming weeks. Here are just some of those events and celebrations:

- Day of the Dead | Dia De Los Muertos, Saturday, November 1- 2. The Day of Remembrance is celebrated across many Latin American countries and in diaspora communities.
- Gurburab, Wednesday, November 5. Celebration of the birth of Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism. Happy Gurburab to all!
- Veterans Day, Tuesday, November 11. Originally called Armistice Day to commemorate the end of World War I, it was changed in 1954 to honor all veterans of all wars.
- 2nd Annual Friendsgiving by MHRC, Thursday, November 20. More info: tinyurl.com/MHRC2ndfriendsgiving
- Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR), Thursday, November 20. TDOR was founded in 1999 by Gwendolyn Smith in honor of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was murdered in Massachusetts.
- Thanksgiving, Thursday, November 27. This is a National US holiday, so remember that state and federal offices are closed on the 27th and 28th.

The Commission meets on the first Monday of every month (unless it's a holiday) at 4 pm at the Howard Office Building. The next meeting is:

Monday, November 3, 4 pm – 6 pm
700 2nd Avenue S. Nashville TN 37201

Our meetings are always open to the public and recorded live on YouTube. You can give public comments in person at any meeting [or submit a comment online](#). Commission meeting agendas and minutes are available on our website.